

tain their guests under a tree ; a circumstance extremely pleasing, as it resembles the practice of the antient patriarchs, and fills the mind with the most pleasing ideas of antient simplicity.

After a short repast, we asked the hermit how long he had lived in that solitary habitation ; and why he chose to seclude himself from society. To which he was pleased to answer, addressing himself to me, " I am a native of Scio, a famous island of the Archipelago, and not a stranger to the customs of Europe, having studied seven years at Rome ; and, after my return, lived many years in my native country ; but being desirous of retiring from the world, and spending the remainder of my days in solitude, I repaired to this mountain, where I have now lived about forty years, and experienced more real pleasure and satisfaction in this sequestered grotto, than in all the noise, bustle and hurry of this busy world. Curiosity, my son, doubtless, inspired thee with a desire of visiting this famous mountain ; but that the journey may not be wholly in vain, attend to the instructions of the aged, and let the hoary head teach thee wisdom. Weigh not the dispensations of heaven in the imperfect balance of human reason ; but be entirely resigned to the will of the Almighty. Murmur not at the seeming frowns of Providence, and the distribution

of riches in this imperfect state*, for they are continually fluctuating like the waves of the ocean, and sooner dissipated than the morning mist. Remember judgments are not sent in vain, nor mercies bestowed without commission. The actions of Omnipotence are directed by infinite wisdom, which cannot err. Repine not, therefore, at thy mortal lot, but always take the present and future state in connection.

Consider this world is not the whole of existence ; and though thou mayest want thy share on this side the grave, comfort thyself with this pleasing, this animating thought, that if you are really pious, thou shalt have large possessions in the regions that lie beyond it. These reflections, my son, will unravel the intricacies of Providence, and solve the perplexing riddles of human life. Consider thine adversities will shortly terminate, and the most poignant afflictions soon reach their period. The clouds of adversity, darkness, and ignorance, that now spread a gloom over all the regions of thy breast, will retire at the appearance of the torch of wisdom ; and when the sun of religion arises in his strength, they will vanish and be seen no more.

* Wealth given by the Almighty to a wicked man, cannot be a proof of the divine approbation of his conduct, but it may be, and often is, both a curse and a snare to the owner.